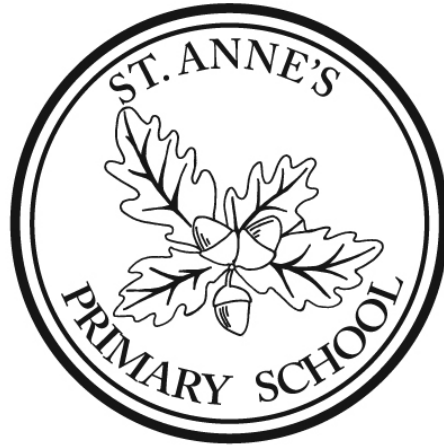


To all external agencies with staff working in St Anne's:
Please ensure that all your personnel who will be working in
St Anne's are given a copy of, and follow the guidance in,
this policy.



St. Anne's Nursery and Primary School

50 Kingsway, Finaghy, Belfast BT10 ONE
Tel: 028 90 615414

Child Protection Policy

(Updated August 2011)

Designated Teacher for Child Protection:	Mrs H Elliott
Deputy Designated Teacher:	Miss R Connor
Deputy Designated Teacher (Nursery):	Mrs M Murphy

ST. ANNE'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Guiding Principles

This policy is in accordance with DENI Circular 99/10

The welfare of the children **is paramount.**

At all times there must be a multi-disciplinary and a multi-agency approach and commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm.

The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, teachers and children must be respected and information will only be shared in the interests of the child's welfare.

Policy Statement

We in St. Anne's Nursery and Primary School have a primary responsibility for the care and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, and in which our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to ensure that everyone who works in the school – teachers, non-teaching staff, governors and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action required when abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. To this end, the school will ensure that all staff, whether full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary are aware of child protection issues, and their role with regard to these. The overriding concern of all the people who come to work in St. Anne's is the care, welfare and safety of each child and **this is paramount.**

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse means ill-treatment or neglect, which leads to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm.

Abusers

Those people who have been identified as abusers through the legal process suggest strongly that abusers tend to be known to the child (but not exclusively) and have regular access to children. Therefore, children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child, such as a foster parent or member of staff in a residential home), people who work in the caring professions, an acquaintance or stranger, who may be an adult or young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or a failure on the part of the parent or carer to act or to provide care, or both.

Abuse may take a number of forms

Neglect

The actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical Injury

Actual or deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical, and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment.

Identification of Abuse

Because of our day-to-day contact with individual children, we as teachers – but also non-teaching staff, including lunch-time supervisors and ancillary staff – are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms or changes in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement or other disruption in family circumstances. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse.

Physical Abuse

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple bruising or bizarre markings on the skin.• Multiple bruising at different stages of resolution.• Bruising and or lacerations around the mouth.• Finger and thumb marks on the face or body.• Black eyes (particularly when both are affected).• Burns, scalds or bites which appear to have been caused by adults.• Untreated injuries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-destructive tendencies.• Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.• Chronic runaway.• Aggressive or withdrawn.• Fear of returning home.• Reluctance to have physical contact.• Clothing inappropriate to weather - worn to hide part of the body.

Neglect

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constant hunger.• Poor state of clothing / personal hygiene.• Untreated medical problems.• Emaciation / distended stomach.• Constant tiredness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tiredness, listlessness.• Lack of social relationships.• Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging.• Frequently absent or late.• Low self-esteem.

Emotional Abuse

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden speech disorder.• Signs of self-mutilation.• Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness).• Wetting and/or soiling.• Attention-seeking behaviour.• Poor peer relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb-sucking).• Reluctance for parent liaison.• Fear of new situations.• Chronic runaway.• Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.

Sexual Abuse

<u>Physical Indicators</u>	<u>Behavioural Indicators</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat.• Torn, stained or bloody underclothes.• Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches.• Difficulty in walking or sitting.• Frequent urinary or yeast infections.• Venereal diseases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chronically depressed/suicidal.• Inappropriately seductive or precocious.• Sexually explicit language.• Low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence.• Recurring nightmares/fear of the dark.• Outbursts of anger/hysteria.• Overly protective of siblings.

Signs of abuse cont'd

The signs of abuse (*not an exhaustive list*) such as those described above can do no more than give rise to concern – they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. But teachers and other school staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and be alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated. A child may make a comment which would indicate a child protection concern. A child may make a disclosure of abuse. Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he or she must report this immediately, following the school's guidelines on the identification and reporting of suspected abuse.

Bullying

A Child Protection Issue

*Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St. Anne's Nursery and Primary School. All members of staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both the victim and the bully will be contacted immediately bullying behaviour has been identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the Designated Teacher within one day of making the complaint, indicating the stage at which the investigation is, and the action that may be taken.

The sanctions against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case. The bully's behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. **If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists then the Designated Teacher will instigate Child Protection procedures.**

What should a worker at St. Anne's do when they suspect abuse?

Teaching and non-teaching staff are in daily contact with children and may be the first to notice changes in a child's behaviour or possible evidence of physical abuse. Children who have been abused may also confide in a member of St. Anne's whom they trust. Therefore, when abuse is suspected it should be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher– Mrs Elliott, and, if she is not available, to the Deputy Designated Teacher - Miss Connor, or the Deputy Designated Teacher for the Nursery – Mrs Murphy. If none of these is available, contact the principal, Mr Keenan. NB. Suspicion of abuse does not mean a disclosure (see Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse)

**(St. Anne's Nursery and Primary School Anti Bullying Policy deals with this issue in more detail)*

Confidentiality

- No promise of secrecy can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.
- Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies.
- All staff should recognise, therefore, that in order to protect children from harm, confidentiality must be subordinated to the need to take appropriate action, by involving others in the child's best interest.

Dealing With Disclosures of Abuse – The 4 Rs

- A child may quite innocently disclose details of abuse that occurs within the family or other situations. It is also the case that children with experience of abuse may unburden themselves to a member of staff as the one adult they can trust.
- It is vital that the member of staff in whom a child has chosen to confide is sympathetic and supportive.
- The member of staff should remain calm and reassuring. Children who have suffered abuse may have low self-esteem or may withdraw if they detect signs of doubt or revulsion. (*Reassure*)
- The member of staff must not promise to keep secret what the child has said and it must be explained to the child that his or her disclosure must be reported.
- The member of staff should listen carefully and quietly but should never attempt to cross-examine the child or press for information.
- Care must be taken in asking questions and interpreting children's responses.
- Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings.
- They should not ask questions, which can later be construed as leading questions. This can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.
- They should, therefore, not ask questions which encourage the child to change his or her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?" (a leading question).
- The chief task at this stage is to listen to the child, and not to interrupt if he or she is freely recalling significant events. - *Receive*

- A note of the discussion should be made immediately after the discussion has taken place, itemising what the child has said. - **Record**

The record should indicate:

- (a) **The information revealed by the child, quoting his or her words, where possible.**
- (b) **To whom the suspicions were reported.**
- (c) **Date, time and signature.**

- No attempt should be made to discuss concerns or fears with the parents or indeed with anyone who is not involved with the care of the child. If the child's allegations prove to be untrue, reporting them to someone who is not concerned with the care of the child may be deemed to be defamatory.
- You must keep a copy of your report and immediately pass a copy to the Designated Teacher, Mrs Elliott or, in her absence to the Deputy Designated Teacher - Miss Connor, or the Deputy Designated Teacher for the Nursery – Mrs Murphy. No copies should be kept in electronic form.- **Report**
- The Designated Teacher, Mrs Elliott or, in her absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher, Miss Connor, or the Deputy Designated Teacher for the Nursery – Mrs Murphy, must always be informed even if the abuse is merely suspected
- Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, or sketched, but under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed.
- Staff should also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings.

RECEIVE & REASSURE

RECORD & REPORT

REFERRAL AND THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

In all cases where abuse is suspected, or where an allegation has been made by a pupil that abuse has taken place, or where serious concerns exist about the welfare of the child, members of staff should report verbally and in written format the information to the Designated Teacher. The Designated Teacher, Mrs Elliott, then meets with the Principal to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made. The Designated Teacher should immediately refer these cases to, or consult with, the social services. She may also notify the Designated Officer of the Belfast Education and Library Board and the CCMS Senior Management Officer (Schools).

In any case where a school has concerns about possible child abuse it is important that a record is kept (not electronically) at all stages – this should include dates, events and action taken.

The following two figures illustrate procedures for action about a complaint or disclosure: Figure 1

Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff.

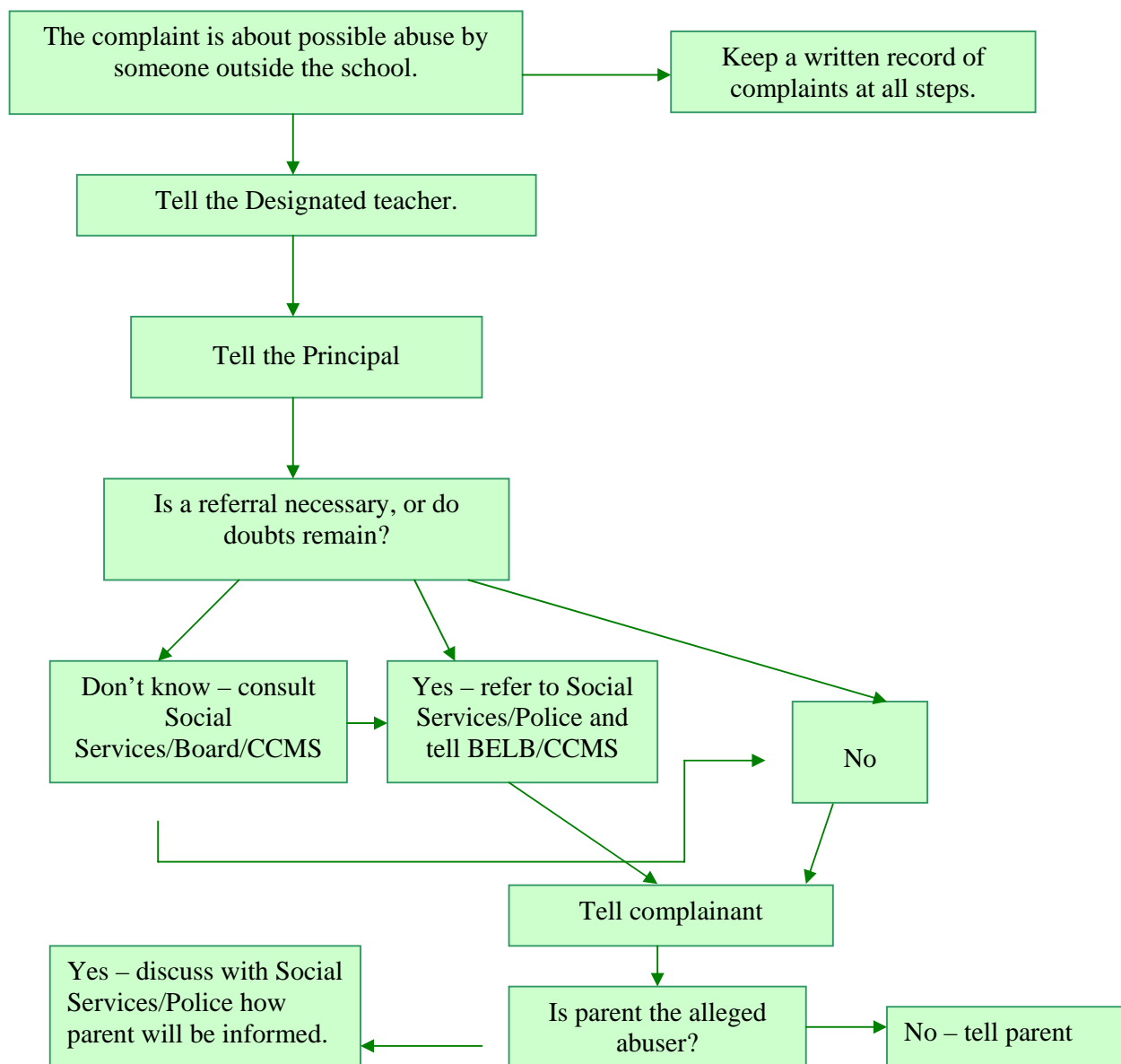
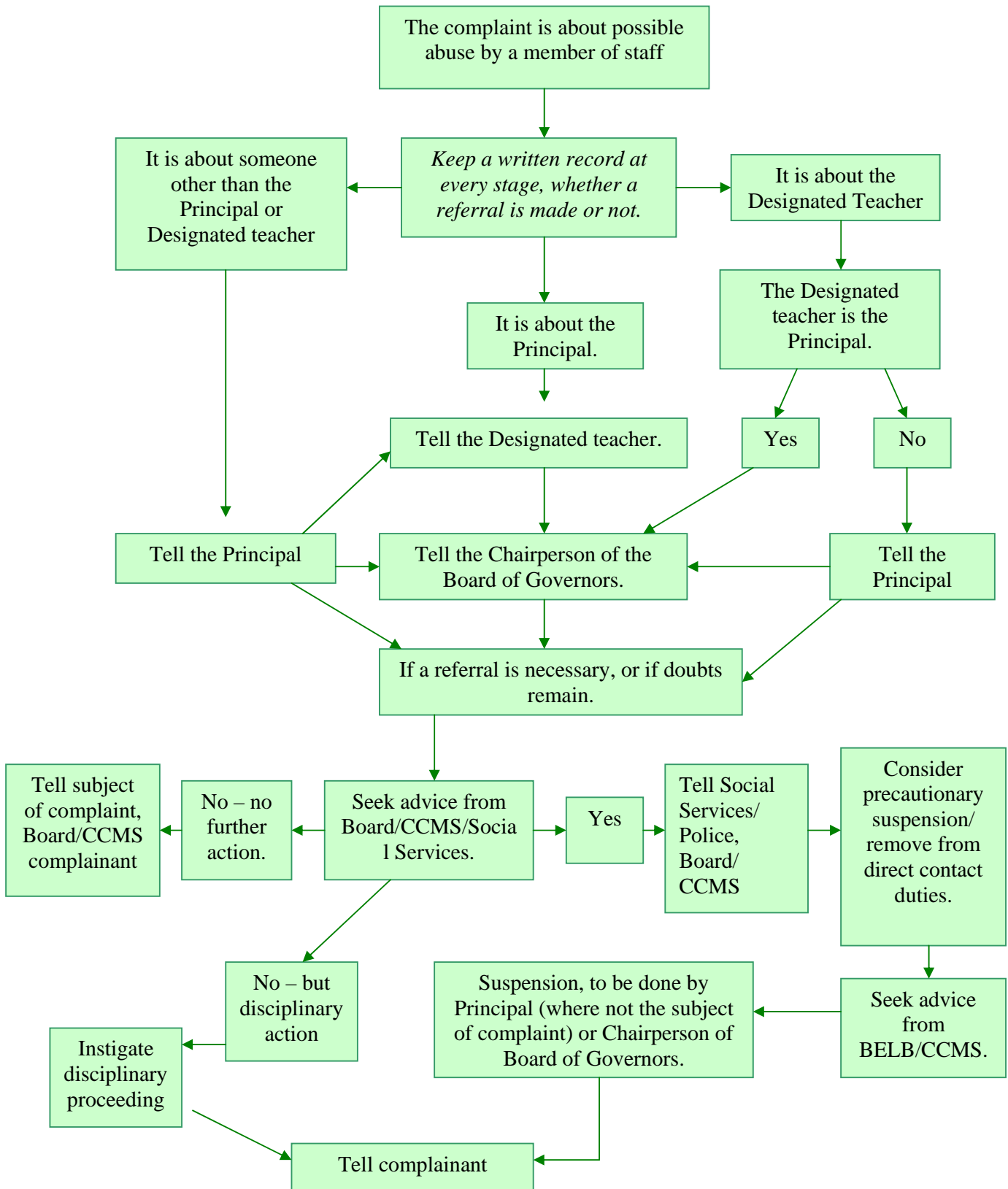


Figure 2

Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff





CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL THOSE WORKING IN ST ANNE'S PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and their behaviour towards children in their charge must be above reproach. The Code of Conduct is not intended to discourage positive interaction between staff and pupils but to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of Child Abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on appropriate conduct.

PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH PUPILS

When confidential interviews are taking place, staff should:

- Conduct such interviews in a room with a visual panel, or with the door open, and not use a sign prohibiting entry to an interview room
- Where possible have another pupil, or preferably another adult, nearby during the interview.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS

- It is important that everyone is aware of the risks they face if they use corporal punishment to discipline pupils, or if they touch children other than to comfort the youngest of them or to deal with injuries or accidents.
- As a general principle staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils. This is particularly the case with older primary school children, especially in Primary 6/7.

Physical contact with Pupils in St Anne's Nursery

Physical contact will be necessary for the staff at St Anne's Nursery Unit, if a child has an accident while, for example at the water tray or at the toilet. Parents are made aware of the possibility of this physical contact and must sign a consent form, allowing it to take place. **Only permanent members of staff may change a child's clothing.**

In order not to place the staff in a suspect position with regard to changing children, they should:

- Tell another member of staff that they are changing the child.
- Change the child in a reasonably open space, if possible where the other member of staff can see them.
- Be gentle with the child, especially if the child needs cleaned following a toileting accident.
- Try not to make the child feel bad about what is happening.
- Respect the child's dignity at all times.

INTIMATE CARE AND CHANGES OF CLOTHING

Full details of procedures in such circumstances are contained in the St Anne's Intimate Care Policy.

PRINCIPLES FOR STAFF CONDUCT

Physical contact, which may be misunderstood by the pupils, parents or other casual observers should be avoided. Putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, which is repeated with an individual pupil, should be avoided. Other more obvious and more intimate contact should never occur.

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting, such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases.

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that their actions may be misunderstood by a pupil, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Designated Teacher at the school. This would apply especially in a case where a child had to be restrained physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury on others or themselves, from damaging property or committing a criminal offence.

- Where possible, staff should avoid one-to-one contact with children in the following areas: toilets, classrooms, cars/minibuses or after school.
- Staff should never invite pupils to their homes.
- Staff must not under any circumstances use corporal punishment, such as hitting. If there is a problem of serious misbehaviour and the member of staff cannot deal with the situation they should bring the pupil(s) to the Principal / Vice Principal.
- If, in an emergency, staff have to administer first aid, they should ensure where possible that other children or another adult are present, if staff have any doubts as to whether necessary physical contact in the circumstances could be misunderstood.
- No member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency because another person is not present.
- Staff must never make sexually suggestive comments to or about a child, even in jest.
- Staff must never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to themselves. If there is an attempted cover-up, staff should be aware that they could be implicated.
- Any report of alleged bullying of a pupil must be passed to the Designated Teacher.

CHOICE AND USE OF TEACHING MATERIALS

- Staff must take due care when using teaching materials of a sensitive nature, especially sex education programmes.
- If members of staff are in doubt, they should consult the Principal.
- Staff should not use unsuitable video/DVD films/programmes. Certificate ‘U’ and ‘PG’ do not necessarily mean they are suitable. ‘Uc’ is the only suitable classification.

RELATIONSHIPS AND ATTITUDES

- Staff should ensure that their relationships with the pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils.
- From time to time, it is prudent for all staff to re-appraise their teaching style, relationships with children, and their manner and approach to individual children to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions in the minds of colleagues, of pupils or of the parents/guardians.

Short-Term Staff

Short-term staff includes temporary and substitute teachers, temporary ancillary staff, temporary Classroom Assistants and Peripatetic staff. They should be made aware of the policy, understanding in particular the Procedures for Disclosure and the “Staff Code of Conduct.”

Vetting Procedures

The school arranges vetting of all staff and volunteers. They are required to complete a police check form, which is passed to ACCESSNI, the vetting service of the PSNI. Official external educational support personnel are vetted by their institution. Students being hosted in St Anne’s PS are vetted by their third-level institutions. Visitors are not left unsupervised in the company of pupils. These procedures are to ensure that those people who work in, or become part of the school community at any time, do not represent a threat to the health and well-being of our pupils.

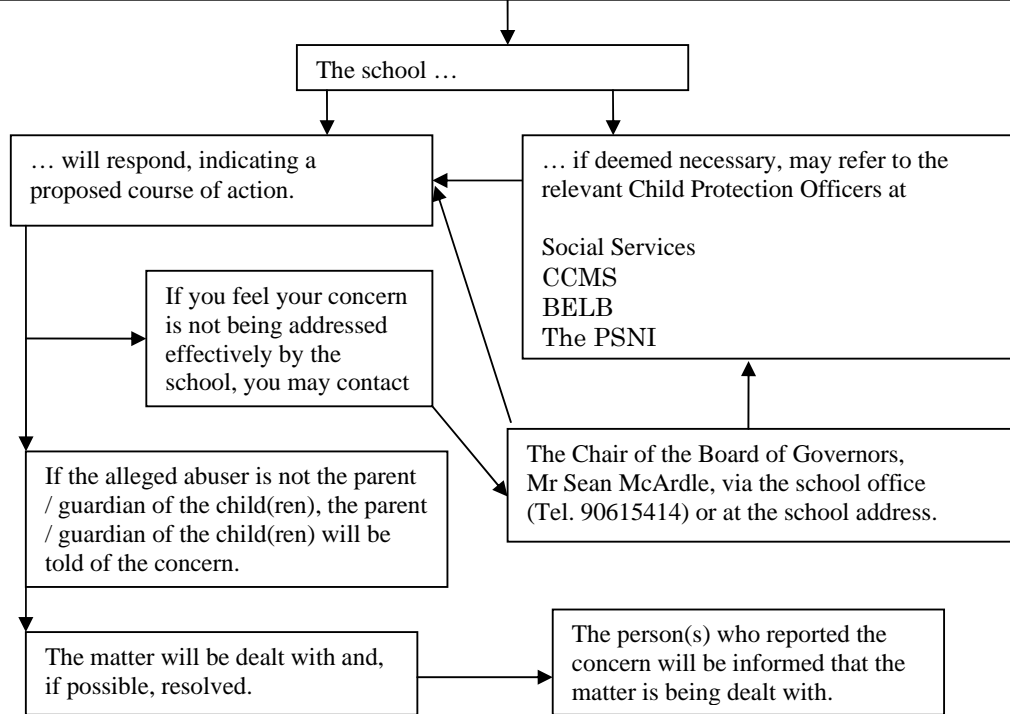
Reporting Arrangements

The following reports **must** be undertaken

1. An annual report regarding the status of pupils on the Child Protection Register must be presented at the Board of Governors.
2. The Chair of the Governors must see, on an annual basis, a record of complaints regarding the conduct of staff, even if there are none.

Parents/Guardians, if you have a concern about the safety of your child or another child, you may:

talk to the class teacher, or you may contact the Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Mrs H Elliott** (90615414) or, in her absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Miss R Connor** (90615414) or the Deputy Designated Teacher for the Nursery: **Mrs Murphy** (90613016) or, in their absence, the Principal, **Mr M Keenan** (90615414)



While it may be necessary to share concerns and complaints, we at St Anne’s will proceed in a confidential manner and only those who need to know will be informed. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have a concern or complaint. We **all** have a **duty of care** to protect children, and their welfare must always be our priority.

You may refer your concerns directly to CCMS or to Social Services or to the PSNI. Contact details as follows (as of August 2011):

Organisation	Telephone	Ask for
CCMS	028 90 327875	Designated Child Protection Officer
PSNI, Tennent Street, Public Protection Unit	028 90259457 (Or out of hours: 028 90 650222)	The Child Protection Team

Belfast Trust, Social Services		
Belfast (gateway number)	028 90 507000	The Duty Social Worker

Down and Lisburn area, Social Services		
Stewartstown Road HC	028 90602705	The Duty Social Worker

All Social Services: OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM 028 90 565444